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**NSC BRIEFING**

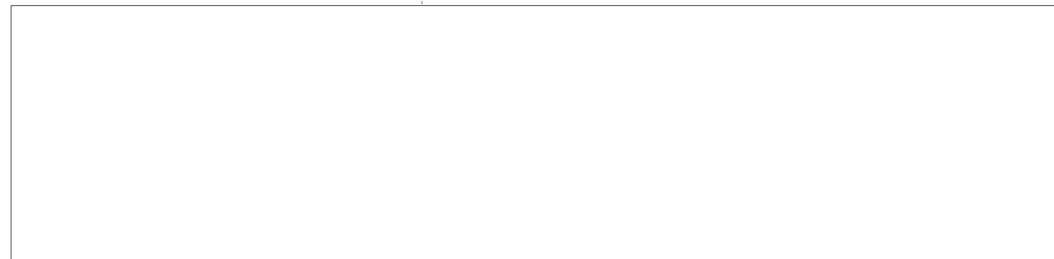
21 January 1954 25X1

**KOREAN PRISONER ISSUE**

25X1

- I. On 14 January Thimayya unilaterally sent a letter to both commands requesting that the two sides take back the prisoners "for retention" until political conference could provide for their disposition.

25X1



- B. The UNC agreed to accept the prisoners starting 20 January on "humanitarian grounds," but refused to accept the conditions relative to the political conference.

25X1

- C. No report of a Communist reply, but expected to reject.

- D. Thimayya publicly stated that if the UNC releases the prisoners after they are returned it would be a violation of the armistice.

- E. UNC position is that POW's must revert to civilian status after 22 January.

II. India is remaining firm on its decision to return POW's between 20-23 January, despite Communist objections.

III. Even if POW's released on schedule, anti-Communist leaders may murder some prisoners who are wavering or who may attempt to go North.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

- A. Indian officials say POW leaders have these men spotted.
  - B. Since Communist explanations and the Indian headcount yielded 3 to 4 percent, as many as 600 could be doomed (15,000 not yet explained to). However, more likely only a few will be killed.
  - C. Anti-Communists could attack 350 pro-Communists in northern camp.
  - D. This considered unlikely due to location of northern camp near Communist lines and difficulty of access.
  - E. Anti-Communists might attack up to 200 who want to go to neutral countries.
  - F. Probable that agents among the anti-Communists will attempt to stir up trouble to point up "illegality" of release and "forcible retention."
- IV. The Communists could intervene with military forces to prevent the release.

25X1

- C. Peiping radio has been threatening "grave consequences" and has accused the UN of planning to "abduct" the POW's.
- D. Has not threatened direct military action.

25X1

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25X1

- G. Unlikely Communists will risk a renewal and expansion of the war over the prisoner issue.
- V. If India reneged at last minute on decision to release the prisoners, violence is likely.
- A. The prisoners would probably attempt a mass breakout.
  - B. Rhee would aid and abet the prisoners, hold violent anti-Indian demonstrations, threaten both Indians and Communists.
  - C. Doubtful that he would take direct military action unless UNC withdrew its protection of Indian troops.
- VI. Most likely prospect is for a release starting the 20th, with only minor disorders.
- VII. India may attempt to placate the Communists if the UNGA is resumed on 9 February.
- A. Could use unfavorable NNRC majority report to place blame on UNC for breakdown of prisoner provisions of armistice.
  - B. May revive the whole question of neutral participation in the political conference which split the West last August.

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